

**NEW PROGRAM PROPOSAL:
MASTER OF URBAN PLANNING
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE**

**ACTION
Agenda Item D-1-c
January 24, 2000**

Recommendation:

That the Master of Urban Planning program proposed by the University of Louisville be approved and registered in CIP 04.0301 (City/Urban, Community and Regional Planning).

Rationale:

- The proposed master's program would provide advanced training to current practitioners of urban planning as well as those seeking to enter this expanding profession. It would be the only graduate-level program in Kentucky to train urban planners.
- As Louisville and Kentucky's other urban areas continue to grow, there is an increased need for people with advanced training in urban planning as cities seek to ensure that growth is properly managed and Kentucky's natural resources are preserved.
- Faculty and students in the program will concentrate their research efforts on land use and environmental planning, and administration of planning organizations.
- The proposed program builds on existing faculty expertise and program strengths at the University of Louisville, which include its Department of Geography and Geosciences, its Master of Public Administration Program, and its Ph.D. Program in Urban and Public Affairs.
- The proposed master's program fits the urban mission of the University of Louisville and would contribute significantly to its goal of becoming a nationally recognized metropolitan research university.

An executive summary submitted by the University of Louisville is attached to this agenda item.

Staff Preparation by Dianne M. Bazell

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Kentucky's urban areas continue to grow and spread into their hinterlands, there is an increasing need to manage that growth in a way that maintains or improves the quality of life while controlling costs. This activity is generally within the purview of professional urban planners. Currently, Kentucky is one of only a few states that do not have a Planning Accreditation Board (PAB) accredited graduate-level planning program. This contributes to several problems. First, Kentucky must compete with other states in its attempt to import professional planning expertise at a time when planning is becoming increasingly important and the demand for planners is growing. Second, students who are interested in a career in planning must leave the state to earn a degree in the field, and most do not return. Third, Kentucky has very few planning educators, which means that research and service to the state's communities in this arena is minimal. Finally, the American Planning Association (APA) allocates money for professional development on the basis of whether or not a state has one or more accredited master's-level programs in planning. Under this formula, Kentucky receives no funds for the enhancement of its professional planning community, a matter of great concern to the Kentucky Chapter of the APA.

The Master of Urban Planning Program proposed herein will go a long way toward mitigating these problems. It will also enhance the University of Louisville's ability to fulfill its metropolitan mission and its goals for academic excellence.

The Master of Urban Planning Program will be a 48 semester hour professional degree program, designed according to the 1999 guidelines established by the PAB. It will consist of 24 credit hours of required core courses in economics, planning history and issues, planning theory and practice, land use and planning law, statistics, and planning methods. An internship will be required, as will a three credit hour capstone studio course, which will focus on actual planning problems.

In addition, the Master of Urban Planning Program will offer three specializations: land use and environmental planning; administration of planning organizations; and spatial analysis for planning. The program will rely on a partnership with the Department of Geography and Geosciences at the University of Louisville to deliver the land use and environment and spatial analysis specializations.

Students graduating from the Master of Urban Planning Program will be prepared to work as qualified professionals in the urban planning field. They will also be prepared to take the American Institute of Certified Planners examination once they meet time-in-service requirements.

A bachelor's degree and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) results will be required for admission. The admissions decision will be based on results achieved in prior academic study, on the GRE, and on relevant practical experience, if any. Initially, the aim will be to achieve target enrollments while maintaining sufficiently high standards to ensure students will be successful in their studies and subsequent careers.

The job outlook for graduates of the Master of Urban Planning Program is quite good. The latest *Jobs Rated Almanac* ranks urban and regional planning 26 out of 250 professions in regard to a range of factors related to job satisfaction. According to the *Almanac*, unemployment is expected to be low for qualified planners. The *Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance 1997* forecasted that the demand for planners should grow faster than the average for all professions through the end of the 1990s. Based on a survey of planning organizations in Kentucky, likely planning-related concerns in Kentucky over the next three to five years will include, among other things, parks and recreation planning, historic preservation, transportation planning, open space planning, regional planning, and development of geographic information systems. All of these subjects will be addressed in the proposed Master of Urban Planning Program.

With regard to staffing, three of the current faculty members in the Department of Urban and Public Affairs hold PhDs in urban planning. Other faculty members have well-developed research and teaching interests in aspects of urban planning. A member of the faculty of the Department of Geography and Geosciences who will be participating in the new program has been certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners and has experience working on local planning boards.

Most of the courses required to make up the proposed program are already taught at the University of Louisville. Designing the new program is largely a matter of repackaging existing offerings. This means that the additional resources required to establish the new program will be quite small relative to the benefits that will be obtained.